

down in the middle of a ring of children, and by her piteous sobs draws forth enquiries as to the cause of her grief, whereupon she sings in answer—

“I'm weeping for a sweetheart, a sweetheart, a sweetheart;
I'm weeping for a sweetheart on a long summer's day.”

The ring of children answer with—

“Oh, pray stand up and choose one, and choose one, and choose one;
Oh, pray stand up and choose one, on a long summer's day.”

If Jinny is naturally prudent, she considers quite a long time, with a corner of her pinafore in her mouth to aid her thoughts. At last she goes up to one of the ring, and pulling him unceremoniously into the middle, the two embrace. The others meanwhile sing—

“Now you're married we wish you joy,
First a girl and then a boy;
Seven years past and seven years over,
Pray cuddle and kiss together;
Kiss her once, kiss her twice, kiss her three times over.
I will not part from my sweetheart
For twopence and three farthings.”

After which the fickle Jinny leaves her sweetheart and joins the ring, and so it goes on in turn.

Besides these they play many good old-fashioned games that we have all played ourselves at one time or other. We feel that we are among old friends when we hear the tune of “Oranges and Lemons,” “Here we come Gathering Nuts and May,” “Do you Know the Muffin Man?”

And you will probably not find it too long before the children's play-time is over, and they break up their games and scatter. Some will go straight home, while others will have first to take their father's dinner to him while he is driving the tram. And a very appetising meal it looks—plenty of hot pease pudding with gravy and a slice or two of boiled beef—and all for fivepence. And so, with the wish that the poor man had a little more leisure in which to enjoy his dinner, you bethink yourself of your own and turn homewards, feeling, I hope, something of the mental refreshment and recreation which comes to the mind when it has for a time been lifted out of its usual groove.

D. N.

CONCENTRATION IN WORK.

AMONGST the various methods by which our leading educationists are trying to make lessons more suitable, and therefore more interesting, to children, may be found that of concentration. Used in their sense, this means the inter-locking of the subjects for instruction so that each lesson shall lead into, or at least have some bearing on, the next.

This method is carried out in great perfection in some of the German schools. Professor Rein's school at Jena is the best known. In his programme, or concentration table for the summer term for 1889, he takes Biblical History as his central subject—Israel in Egypt. There are drawing lessons on Egyptian columns; the geography lesson opens up a vast field for study—sandy deserts, oases, river deltas, irrigation; the Pyramids are modelled, and the whole period is made of vivid interest to the child. In the second school year the book “Robinson Crusoe” is taken as the central thought, and the children do, as far as possible, everything Robinson Crusoe does. They build houses, cook dinners, make baskets with reeds, rafts, and learn to read and write. In some American schools, I believe, geography is taken as the central subject for concentration, and the other studies grouped round it. It is a good subject to take, as it links itself naturally with so many others; it is closely related to history; map-making relates it to drawing, geometry, and arithmetic; the vegetation, climate, etc., to the Natural Sciences.

Of course there are certain subjects which must stand more or less alone, though I can think of no subject which does not link itself with at least *one* other. Arithmetic and instrumental music might, at first sight, appear to be isolated, but they are connected with one another through the theory of music, to which arithmetic is indispensable. This may be illustrated by the time-names used in the Curwen system of music, which are mental pictures of fractions.

We believe that the object of instruction is the formation of ideas, and surely the idea of the unity of their work ought to be a central one to children. We know the strength of the association of ideas, how every thought is linked to some other thought in our minds, and the remembrance of one leads to the remembrance of the other; therefore it is easy to see that the more we can bring this principle into the children's lessons

the more successful will they be, in the best sense of the word. This is very different from the old way of working—"instruction in spots." Then, if a child in reading of the battle of Hastings, asked where Hastings was, he was told: "This is not the geography lesson;" or, if in geography, he wanted to know which king fought at Marston Moor, he was told to keep to the matter in hand and not ask history questions in a geography lesson.

Of course the "concentration" method is much harder on the teacher. He must be better up in his subjects, prepared for any questions that may be asked, and must be patient if some of the questions seem a little wide of the mark, as the new idea associates itself with other ideas already formed, and the struggle to connect the two—the new and the old—is going on.

Mr. Adams says, in his book on "Herbartian Psychology": "Verbs of teaching govern two accusatives, one of the *person*, another of the *thing*, as—The master taught John Latin. Hitherto it was enough for the master to know Latin; now it is required of him to know something of John also." *We* must know something of "John," and judge whether his questions are idle or thoughtful, whether he is taking the subject or playing with it.

Froebel says, in his "Education of Man," that we must show the children that "Religion, mathematics, and language have all one mission and purpose—to reveal the inner world;" and may we not hope that by endeavouring to keep this unity of work before their eyes, we may lead the children on to grasp the fundamental thought of the Divine Unity underlying all things.

JESSIE M. BAIRD.

TALKS WITH NURSES.

ALL of us in our dealings with children must have noticed the enormous influence "Nurse" has over them. If she has been with them from babyhood, as is so often the case, she really has more influence than any one else over the children. On this account it is of the utmost importance to us that she should understand and sympathise with our principles in dealing with the little people. When the P. N. E. U. was first started the parents had no trained governesses to help them,

but the need was so keenly felt that Miss Mason organised the training course at the House of Education which we have so much enjoyed and profited by. Now, both parents and teachers want the co-operation of the nurses, and in order to gain this it is necessary for us to give them some opportunities of learning our methods.

Last autumn I was asked if I would undertake to give some readings and talks to nurses.

I must confess I felt rather nervous about it. The nurses had most of them been with their charges for years, and I felt they must have gained so much knowledge by experience that they would hardly care to listen to what I had to say. On the first evening about twelve nurses made their appearance, and I felt rather as though I were about to give a criticism lesson. I found that only one or two had read "Home Education," and proceeded to tell them as well as I could how it had come to be written, taking most of my matter from the Introduction and early part of the first lecture. I explained what we meant by Education, and tried to make them see how much they could do to help us. I read some extracts from my report of one of Miss Mason's lectures, and also part of Lecture I.

I tried to get the nurses to talk and ask questions, asked them to bring their work, thinking it would perhaps make them feel more at ease, but very few of them ventured to make a remark at first.

The following evenings I read through Lecture I. and parts of Lecture II. with them, illustrating as much as possible and introducing appropriate passages from my own reports of some of Miss Mason's lectures.

I *told* as much as I could in preference to reading, for I found them more interested; and also I could tell them more quickly when they did not quite grasp my meaning, or when their attention flagged.

One evening I devoted to the Brain—just a physiology lesson, which interested them immensely, and was of course the forerunner of a talk on habit the following week. I read them the story in "Parents and Children" of the boy whose passionate temper was overcome by the formation of a contrary good habit. That interested them and made them ask a good many questions, so we spent a whole evening over it.

Our last talk I devoted to Untruthfulness; some of its causes and effects, and how it should be treated, obtaining the matter from a lecture of Miss Mason's and a chapter in "Parents and Children."

The nurses were fairly regular in their attendance, and seemed to enjoy the evenings. I think any student who tried to get up such a course would find them eager to attend. They are always most devoted to their little charges.

E. M. F.